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Nashville as a Book City • Spring Sneak Previews
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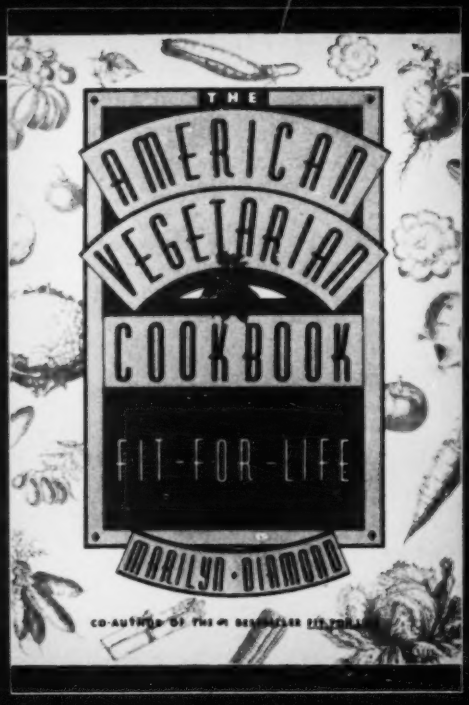

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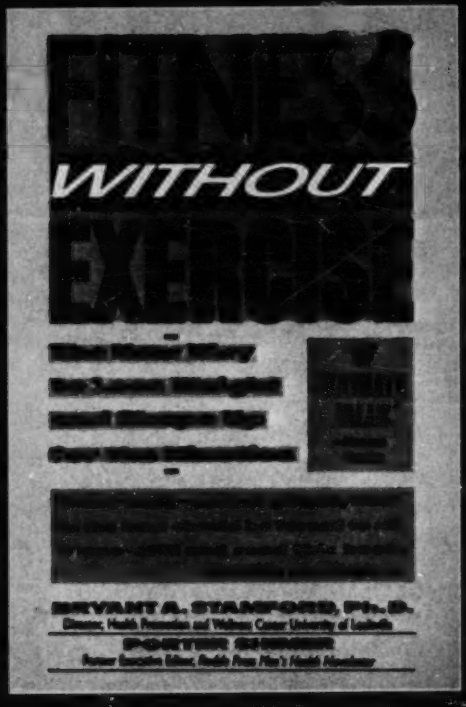

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America's Biggest Publishers

Our first ranking of the top 20

Company	Employees	Titles	Latest Revenues*	Previous Revenues*	% Change
1. Simon & Schuster	9000	N/A	$1300 (est.)	$1200	8.3%
2. Time Inc. Book Co.[1]	N/A	2283	988	891	10.8
3. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	4313	4961	879.7 ('88)	802.5	9.6
4. Random House[2]	N/A	c.1720	800 est.	500 est.	60.0
5. Reader's Digest[3]	2700	35	N/A	780 (est.)	—
6. McGraw-Hill	N/A	N/A	727.2 ('88)	706.4	2.9
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica[4]	2300	13	624	590	5.8
8. Bantam Doubleday Dell[5]	1400	c.1400	600	549	9.3
9. Times Mirror[6]	3000	N/A	520	425	22.3
10. The Thomson Corp.	N/A	N/A	500	475	0.5
11. Harper & Row[7]	2329	2600	450	398	13.0
12. Grolier	5800	N/A	443.3	443.3	0
13. Western[8] Publishing	2500	750	450	N/A	—
14. Houghton Mifflin	2150	715	368.3 ('88)	343.4	7.3
15. World Book Encyclopedia	650	N/A	310	N/A	—
16. Maxwell Macmillan[9]	N/A	700	300 plus (est.)	N/A	—
17. John Wiley[10]	1800	640	259	240	7.9
18. Penguin USA[11]	N/A	c.1830	225	N/A	—
19. Putnam Group	809	1088	200	176	13.4
20. St. Martin's	350	1200	161	133	21.0

*Revenues in millions

Creating the List

Erratic financial years, incomplete records on staff and titles, and the secrecies of privately held companies, all call for a certain amount of guesswork

[1] Time Inc. Book Co. results projected for 1989 include Warner Books as well as BOMC; Scott, Foresman, a major element in these results, was sold in December.

[2] Random declined to give sales figures. Figures given are estimates of sales before and after Crown acquisition.

[3] Reader's Digest is going public, and thus cannot give current figures. Previous year was published estimate. Employees are U.S. only.

[4] EB figures are for a fiscal year ending in September.

[5] BDD results show estimated worldwide sales for a fiscal year ending June 30, and do not include Literary Guild sales.

[6] Times Mirror employees are book employees only. Results for both years are estimates for book operations only.

[7] Harper results include Canadian sales.

[8] Western Publishing expects a loss in 1989, but is unable to release specific figures before year's end.

[9] Macmillan estimated sales are of books only and do not include journals or book club sales.

[10] Wiley figures are for fiscal year ending in April.

[11] Penguin figures do not include results from Addison-Wesley, which is also part of the Pearson group.

WHICH ARE America's biggest publishing operations? The top three or four are easy, surely. Or are they? And after that comes. . . .

In any case, the order of the players changes, often dramatically, from year to year as conglomeration continues apace. Only a year ago Crown and Random House were separate, privately owned entities; now they are one. Random was a major player in educational publishing; now it's not. A year ago, too, Time and Warner also lived their different lives—and Time had Scott, Foresman. And so it goes.

The accompanying chart represents *PW*'s first attempt to put together some of the salient figures regarding the biggest companies. In each case we have tried to show current gross revenues, as compared to the last year, with the resulting rate of change. And because such figures are particularly interesting at a time when talk of streamlining is much in the air, we've also indicated how many employees each company has (in cases where the company is a major international player, in the U.S. alone) and the approximate number of titles published in the past year, or at least in a recent typical year.

There are many difficulties in creating such a list. Privately held companies don't talk, of course, and don't have to; in those cases, we've had to rely on educated guesses from financial observers and sometimes from company insiders. And even public companies with book divisions don't always separate the books from other information products like newspapers, magazines and journals in their annual reports. Financial years, too, are all over the place, and in some cases the current figure represents an educated guess, either from an informed source or with off-the-record guidance. Likewise, many companies weren't able to put a figure on their staff numbers employed in book publishing, and, in some companies with several divisions, including trade, educational and professional, the numbers of titles were too diffuse to be readily collected. Many companies simply are not organized in such a way that this material is centrally recorded.

Such a list can therefore be only suggestive rather than definitive. The original plan was to take it to 25, but by the time we got to 20 we realized that some of the companies listed might easily be supplanted by others we hadn't considered: the Hearst Group, for instance, would certainly have appeared in such a list, although its results didn't quite make the top 20. As it is, there may be qualified top-20 companies that we have omitted; we expect and hope that by the time we begin preparations for next year's list, we'll be able to expand it.

—THE EDITORS